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Powder River



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Expedition





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THE
POWDER RIVER INDIAN EXPEDITION,

1865.

*A Paper read before the Nebraska Commandery of the Military Order of
the Loyal Legion of the United States,*

FEBRUARY 2, 1887.

By H. E. Palmer.

(LATE CAPTAIN CO. "A," 11TH KANSAS VOLUNTEER CAVALRY.)

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1887.

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THE POWDER RIVER INDIAN EXPEDITION.

In August, 1864, I was ordered to report to General Curtis, who commanded the department of Kansas, at Ft. Leavenworth, and was by him instructed to take command of a detachment of the 11th Ohio Volunteers (cavalry), sixty men, every one of them lately Confederate soldiers with John Morgan on his raid into Ohio, captured there and confined at Columbus; they had enlisted in the Federal service under the pledge that they were to fight Indians, and not rebels. I was to conduct these men to Ft. Kearney and there turn them over to Captain Humphreyville of the 11th Ohio.

On my way out, near Big Sandy, now Alexandria, Thayer county, Nebraska, I met a party of freighters and stage coach passengers on horseback, and some few ranchmen, fleeing from the Little Blue Valley. They told me a terrible story; that the Indians were just in their rear, and how they had massacred the people west of them—none knew how many. All knew that the Cheyennes had made a raid into the Little Blue Valley striking down all before them. After camping for dinner at this place and seeing the last citizen disappear toward the states, I pushed on to the Little Blue—camped in the valley—saw two Indians about five miles away on a hill as I went into camp. Next day I passed Eubank's Ranch, found three little children, from three to seven years old, who had been taken by the heels and swung round against the log cabin, beating their heads to a perfect jelly. Found the hired girl some fifteen rods from the ranch staked out on the prairie, tied by her hands and feet, naked, body full of arrows and horribly mangled. Not far from this was the body of Eubank, whiskers cut off, body most

fearfully mutilated. The buildings had been fired—ruins yet smoking. Nearly the same scene of desolation and murder was witnessed at Spring Ranch. Camped that night at Liberty Farm. Next day passed trains, in one place seventy wagons loaded with merchandise, en route for Denver. The teamsters had mounted the mules and made their escape. The Indians had opened boxes containing dry goods, taking great bolts of calicoes and cloths, carried off all they wanted, and had scattered the balance, all they could, around over the prairie. Bolts of cloth had been seized by Indians on horseback, who had dropped the bolt, holding on to one end of the cloth and galloped off over the prairie to stretch it out. Five wagons loaded with coal oil, in large twenty gallon cans, had been inspected by the Indians; some fifteen or twenty cans had been chopped open with hatchets, to see what was inside. None of them had sense enough to set the coal oil on fire, otherwise the entire train would have been destroyed; several wagons had been fired and burned. These Indians had attacked the troops at Pawnee Ranch, under the command of Captain E. B. Murphy, of the 7th Iowa Cavalry, and had driven them into Ft. Kearney, although he had with him about one hundred and fifty men, and two pieces of artillery. By this time the main body of the Indians were far away in the Republican Valley, en route for Solomon River. I followed their rear guard to a point near where the town of Franklin in Franklin county, on the Republican, now stands. Camped there one night, and then marched north to Ft. Kearney. On that day's march we saw millions of buffalo.

This raid on the Blue was made by the Cheyennes under the command of Black Kettle, One-Eyed George Bent, Two Face and others. Mrs. Eubank and a Miss Laura Roper were carried away captives. We ransomed them from the Indians, who brought them into Ft. Laramie in January, 1865. Just prior to this outbreak on the Little Blue, a number of the same Indians had attacked a train near Plum Creek, thirty-one miles west of Ft. Kearney, on the south side of the Platte, and had

killed several men. From Plum Creek they moved on down the Little Blue, passing south of Ft. Kearney.

Col. J. M. Chivington, commanding the 1st Colorado, was in command of the district of Colorado, headquarters at Denver, and during October and November, 1864, made several raids after these Indians. On the 29th of November, 1864, Col. Chivington, with three companies of the 1st Colorado and a detachment of the 3rd Colorado under command of Col. George L. Shoup, attacked Black Kettle, who with White Antelope, One-Eyed George Bent and other bands, were encamped on Sand Creek, one hundred and ten miles south-south-east of Denver. He attacked them just at daylight after a forty-mile ride in the dark by the troops. The Indians were surprised and, according to the very best estimate, five or six hundred were killed—men, women and children. The fight was made in the village and the troops had no time to pick for the men and save the squaws. The half-breed Indian chief, One-Eyed George Bent, a son of old Col. Bent, an educated rascal, was found among the dead. This was the first great punishment the Indians of the plains had received since Harney's fight at Ash Hollow.

On the 7th of January following, the military and stage station at Julesburg, at the old California crossing on the south bank of the Platte, was attacked by the Indians. Captain Nicholas J. O'Brien, familiarly known among white men as "Nick O'Brien," and by the Indians as O-zak-e-tun-ka, was in command of the troops. The Indians, Sioux and Cheyennes, to the number of about one thousand, ran the stage into the station, killing one man and one horse. Capt. O'Brien left a sergeant and twelve men in the fort to handle the two pieces of artillery, and, mounting the rest, thirty-seven men and one officer besides himself, went to meet the savages. As the men neared the top of the hill they saw the large force opposed to them, but never flinched. The Indians charged on them with great fury and killed fourteen of the soldiers. Captain O'Brien ordered his force to fall back, which they did in good order,

leaving their dead comrades to fall into the hands of the Indians. The redskins endeavored to cut them off from the fort, and came very near doing it. The men finally gained the fort and held the enemy at bay with the artillery—two mountain howitzers. Night put an end to the conflict. The Indians withdrew during the night, and in the morning no one was in sight. The soldiers went out to find the bodies of their dead comrades; found them, but nearly all were beyond recognition; stripped of clothing, horribly mutilated, their fingers, ears and toes cut off, their mouths filled with powder and ignited, and every conceivable indignity committed on their persons. The Indians, as they afterwards admitted, lost over sixty warriors. None were found on the field, as they always carry away their dead with them.

In the winter of 1865, some time in December, I think, Brevet Brigadier General Tom. Moonlight, now governor of Wyoming, was placed in command of the district of Colorado, and, until in May, had his headquarters at Denver. Some time during this month he made his headquarters at Laramie. In March the district of the Plains was created and Gen. P. E. Conner was ordered from his command at Salt Lake to take command of the new district, with headquarters first at Ft. Kearney, then at Denver, and in June at Julesburg. At Laramie Gen. Moonlight organized an expedition to punish these marauding Indians. Before starting out on his expedition he learned from some of the trappers that two white women were with Two Face's band near the south base of the Black Hills. Through interpreters, trappers and Ogalalla Sioux, communication was opened up with these Indians, and for a large number of ponies, blankets and a quantity of sugar, etc., the two white women were purchased from the Indians and brought into Laramie. Two Face and two of his best warriors came in with the prisoners to surrender them. The armistice was violated, Two Face and his warriors arrested and hanged in chains, about two miles north of the fort, on the bluffs, where their bodies were allowed to hang until the crows carried away all the flesh.

from their bones. One of these women, Mrs. Eubank, was the wife and mother of the massacred party at Eubank's Ranch, near Spring Ranch, on the Little Blue in Nebraska, now one of the best settled portions of this state. I had known Mrs. Eubank before the Indian troubles—met her at her home in the spring of 1861, just after she had moved from Ohio to brave the dangers of a pioneer life and do the cooking for stage coach passengers on the old Ben. Holliday line. She was a fine looking woman, full of youth, beauty and strength, but a short time married, with bright prospects for the future. I remember, too, that her log cabin was unlike anything else I had seen on the road west. The dirt roof, supported by heavy timbers, was hid by cotton cloth, which gave to the interior of the cabin a clean, tidy look; the rough board floor was covered with a plain carpet; real china dishes, not greasy tin pans and cups, appeared upon the table. That, with a fine dinner, made an indelible impression upon my mind. As I stood at the smoking ruins of her home in August, 1864, knowing that her body could not be found, and wondering if she were a captive among the Indians, I thought then: would I ever see her again alive? A few weeks after her rescue from the Indians I met her again at Ft. Laramie. The bright-eyed woman appeared to me to be twenty years older. Her hair was streaked with gray, her face gave evidence of painful suffering, and her back, as shown to General Conner and myself, was a mass of raw sores from her neck to her waist, where she had been whipped and beaten by Two Face's squaws. The sores had not been permitted to heal, and were a sight most sickening to behold. The poor woman was crushed in spirit and almost a maniac. I sent an escort with her and her companion, Miss Laura Roper, with an ambulance to Julesburg, where they were placed upon a coach and returned to the east. Miss Roper lived and married in Beatrice, Neb. Mrs. Eubank went back to her friends in Ohio, and I have never heard from her since.

Moonlight's raid after the Indians was a failure. Through the grossest mismanagement he allowed his command to be

ambushed, his horses captured and several men killed, retreating to Ft. Laramie in time to receive an order from General P. E. Conner to report to the commanding officer at Ft. Kearney, Nebraska, for muster out of service.

My company was ordered upon the plains in February, 1865. Left Ft. Riley on the 16th. After experiencing a most fearful snow storm and blizzard the command, about six hundred strong, reached Ft. Kearney, Nebraska, on the 3d day of March, 1865, and in a few days pushed on to Lodge Pole Creek and camped near the present town of Sidney, where they went into winter quarters; remaining there, however, only a few weeks; then they were ordered to Mud Springs where they again attempted to build winter quarters; from there to Laramie, Platte Bridge and Ft. Halleck; then they were strung out on the overland stage route with some twenty-five hundred men in all, guarding the through mail line. I had returned to Ft. Leavenworth from Ft. Kearney on detached service, and in June, 1865, was ordered to report to General Conner; found him at the old California crossing on the Platte.

General Conner had with him two companies, L and M, of the 2d California Cavalry, and a detachment of the 11th Ohio, under command of Captain Humphreyville and Captain O'Brien, with his company of the 7th Iowa Cavalry and two mountain howitzers, manned by Captain O'Brien's men and commanded by him. The command was delayed several hours trying to cross the Platte, which was then receiving snow water from the mountains, and was even bank. The crossing was made by swimming the stock and floating over the stores, wagons, etc., in wagon boxes covered with tarpaulins. The men were also crossed on these rafts. We camped on the Lodge Pole. In the afternoon after the first day's march from the Platte, the men indulged in fishing in Lodge Pole Creek. Trout and pike were hauled out by the bushel with gunny sack seines. While we were cooking our fish, forty mules that had made themselves useful drawing headquarter's wagons and ambulances, etc., feeding on the opposite bank of the creek,

about one hundred yards from headquarters, were frightened by a jack rabbit. One of the mules leading the band was feeding close to a monstrous jack rabbit sitting behind a bunch of sage brush. Lieutenant Jewett, aid-de-camp, and myself happened to discover the rabbit just before the mule saw it. He remarked that he thought we would see some fun when the mule got a little closer to the rabbit. Sure enough, when the mule got within a few feet of the rabbit, Mr. Jack gave a monstrous jump to change location. The mule gave a snort and started back among the herd on a gallop. All the rest of the mules joined the leader, becoming more frightened at every jump, and away they went for the hills about a mile away, no stop or halt until they disappeared. The general ordered a squad of cavalrymen to gather their hobbled animals and start in pursuit. This was done, but "nary" a mule was seen afterwards. When the cavalry reached the hills they were met by a band of Indians, who beat them back. Before we could assist them, both Indians and mules were far away, and before we got near them they were across the North Platte near Ash Hollow, enroute for the Black Hills. Next day we were attacked by Indians near Mud Springs and gave them a lively chase, the fight not ending until about ten o'clock at night, when the men gathered in camp to prepare their supper.

Soon after the return to camp General Conner decided he must send Lieutenant Oscar Jewett, his aid-de-camp, who had great experience in Indian warfare, to Chimney Rock, some thirty miles north, where a large supply train in charge of Leander Black was encamped. Overhearing the instructions to Lieutenant Jewett, that he must go alone and run the risk of riding among the Indians, I begged General Conner to allow me to accompany Jewett. At that time I had not been assigned to any particular duty—was simply a passenger in the General's ambulance, enroute to join my company, which was supposed to be stationed at Platte Bridge, on the North Platte, west of Laramie. To impress the General with my claims, I gave him to understand that I had seen much of the Indians

and was as capable of dodging their arrows as Lieutenant Jewett. After some hesitancy the General consented that I might go, but instructed us to ride at least six hundred yards apart, one behind the other. We left at 11 o'clock, and before daylight next morning were in the camp of the supply train, and had the men aroused ready to meet an attack expected at daylight. The ride was a very interesting one, the night being as dark as any I ever experienced. Neither one of us heard or saw the other until we met in Black's camp.

Next day General Conner issued an order assigning me to duty as Assistant Adjutant General, District of the Plains. Our march from this point (Chimney Rock) to Ft. Laramie was devoid of anything particularly exciting. We were detained at Ft. Laramie until the 30th day of July, awaiting supply trains. During this time three expeditions were organized by General Conner, supplied with trains of provisions and munitions of war, and started for a general rendezvous at the mouth of the Rosebuds on the south bank of the Yellowstone River. One of these expeditions, composed of the 16th Kansas, under command of Colonel Thompson, left us at Laramie, marching in an easterly direction toward the headwaters of the Niobrara, where they intercepted the second column, composed of the 11th and 12th Missouri Mounted Infantry, under command of Colonel N. P. Cole. The entire command, amounting to some sixteen hundred fighting men, were ordered to pass north of the Black Hills across the Powder River to the Rosebud.

Before starting we had a lively little matinee with the 16th Kansas, who mutinied, the entire regiment refusing to go after the Indians. They alleged that their term of service would be up before the expedition could be terminated, and that they had not enlisted to fight Indians—had not lost any red devils and were not disposed to hunt for any. This mutiny was promptly checked by General Conner, who appeared on the scene with his two companies of California troops (who were devotedly attached to the General), two pieces of artillery and a detach-

ment of the 11th Ohio cavalry and formed them in line of battle ready for an immediate attack upon the Kansas camp, unless they fell into line within five minutes and promised obedience to orders. The Kansas boys were smart enough to smell danger and to take the General at his word. They fell into line and went out upon the dismal, unprofitable, inglorious hunt after "scalp lifters."

Before leaving Laramie, about the 25th of July, I was relieved as Adjutant General by Captain C. J. Laurant, a regular Assistant Adjutant General, who had been sent by the Secretary of War to report to General Conner. The General refused to let me join my company and issued an order announcing me as his Acting Assistant Quartermaster, and instructed me to provide transportation, forage, etc., for the expedition.

I found that there were only about seventy government wagons at Fort Laramie; that the commissary stores and forage required for the expedition, and required by the command under Colonel Cole, would require in the neighborhood of two hundred wagons to transport the same. I was compelled to press citizens' outfits into service.

I pressed into service forty wagons belonging to Ed. Creighton, which were under the charge of Thomas Alsop, captured Tom Pollock's train of thirty wagons, and other trains too numerous to mention, until I had a train of one hundred and eighty-five wagons.

Our command left Fort Laramie on the 30th day of July, 1865, enroute for the Powder River. Our column was known as the "Powder River Indian Expedition," and was composed of sixty-eight men belonging to company F, 7th Iowa Cavalry, under command of Captain N. J. O'Brien, with First Lieutenant John S. Brewer, Second Lieutenant Eugene F. Ware; sixty men of company E, 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, under Captain Marshall; seventy men of company K, 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, Captain J. L. Humphreyville; fifty-seven men of company E, 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry; sixty-one

men of company M, 2d California Cavalry, commanded by Capt. Albert Brown; forty-four men of Company L, 2d California Cavalry, commanded by Captain George Conrad; fourteen men, a detachment of the 2d Missouri Artillery; fifteen men, a detachment of the signal corps of the United States Army, under command of Lieutenant J. Willard Brown, assisted by Second Lieutenant A. V. Richards; fifteen men on detached service from the 11th Ohio Cavalry, serving in the Quartermaster's department; seventy-five Pawnee scouts under command of Captain Frank North, and seventy Winnebago and Omaha Indians under command of Captain E. W. Nash, together with six companies of the 6th Michigan Cavalry, numbering about two hundred and fifty men, under command of Colonel Kidd. The Michigan troops were intended as a garrison for the first military post established, to be located on the Powder River, and were not properly a part of the left column on the Powder River Indian Expedition. Not including the Michigan troops, we had, all told, four hundred and four soldiers and one hundred and forty-five Indians, together with about one hundred and ninety-five teamsters and wagon-masters in the train, which was in the direct charge of Robert Wheeling, Chief Train Master. The General's staff was limited to five officers: Captain C. J. Laurant, A. A. G.; Captain Sam. Robbins, 1st Colorado Cavalry, Chief Engineer; myself as Quartermaster; Captain W. H. Tubbs, A. C. S.; and Oscar Jewett, A. D. C.

We arrived at the south bank of the Platte, August 1st, expecting to cross at the old La Bonta crossing. The General, with his guides and advance guards, had arrived the night before, expecting from information furnished by his guides that he would find a good crossing here. Our guides, chief among whom were Major James Bridger, Nick Janisse, Jim. Daugherty, Mich. Bouyer, John Resha, Antwine LaDue and Bordeaux, were supposed to be thoroughly posted on this country, especially with the region so near Ft. Laramie, where they had been hundreds of times. But the treacherous Platte was too much for them. The spring flood that had just passed had

washed away the crossing, and after ten hours' diligent searching, not one of the cavalry escort could find a place to cross the river without swimming his horse and endangering his life. Coming up with the train, which had been delayed and did not reach camp until afternoon, I found the General thoroughly discouraged and more than disgusted with his guides. The river had been examined for four miles each way from LaBonta crossing, and not a place could be found where it would be possible to cross a train. The alternative was presented to march to Platte Bridge, one hundred and thirty miles out of our regular course. Soon after parking the train I rode off by myself, on my Government mule, up the river, searching for an antelope. Without noticing the distance traveled I was soon nearly five miles from camp and out of sight of same over a sharp bluff near the river. Just beyond this bluff I discovered a fresh buffalo trail leading down into the water, and across the river on the opposite bank could distinguish tracks that the buffalo had made coming out of the stream. Curious to know how they could cross so straight without swimming in the rapid current, I rode my mule into the river and crossed on a good solid bottom. Returning by the same route, I marked the location in my mind, rode back to camp in time for supper. Soon after feasting on antelope steak that I had captured on my expedition, and having lit my pipe, I strolled up to General Conner and asked if he proposed crossing the Platte at this point, or if he intended to go around by the bridge. The General seemed put out by my question, which, under the circumstances, he considered aggravating, and answered me rather roughly that we would have to go round by the bridge. I told him that if it was the train that bothered him about crossing, I would guarantee to have it on the opposite bank of the river by daybreak the next morning. The General's reply was: "Very well, sir; have it there." After 9 P. M., when all was still in camp, I detailed a gang of teamsters, about forty men, with picks and shovels, and marched them up the river to the buffalo trail and set them to work

making a road. It being a moonlight night the work was easily prosecuted, and by break of day on the morrow the lead team of the one hundred and eighty-five wagons stood, leaders in the river, waiting the command to march. As soon as it was light enough to distinguish the opposite shore I rode in ahead of the leaders and gave the command "forward." There was no break or halt until the train was parked opposite the General's camp, all before sunrise. In fact the entire train was parked, the mules turned loose to graze and the men preparing their breakfast, when the sentinels on the opposite bank of the river discovered the train beyond the Platte and gave the alarm to the General, who rushed out of his tent in his stocking feet to see what he did not believe was true. He immediately ordered "boots and saddles" to be sounded, and in a short time the entire command was with us. After breakfast our column moved on, passing over a country perfectly destitute of grass or timber, and scarcely any water.

August 2nd and 3rd. Made thirty-three miles, following up the north bank of the Platte, nothing of interest transpiring worthy of record.

August 4th. Opened with a cold, drizzling rain. Broke camp at six A. M. Weather soon cleared off. Found roads hilly; in fact no roads at all—an absolutely untracked country. No wagon had ever been near our line of march. Captain Brown, with two California companies, were ordered to push on, following the Platte, while we struck off to the right. They were to come by way of Platte Bridge to the south slope of the Big Horn Mountains into the Wind River Valley, and thoroughly reconnoitre that region of the country, and to rejoin us within twenty or twenty-five days near the Crazy Woman's Fork of the Powder River, which stream they were to strike near the head and follow down until they intercepted our command. The Omaha or Winnebago scouts under command of Captain Nash, seventy men, accompanied them. Flanking parties were reinforced on our line of march to-day, the Pawnee scouts composing same; also a party of the same scouts two

or three miles ahead of the command. Every precaution was taken to guard against surprises. Parties were sent ahead for Indian signs, the guides reporting several strong indications of war parties having traveled the country ahead of us. Our course after leaving the Platte was in a northwesterly direction. Our guides advise us that in the future our camps will be at springs, and that we will undoubtedly suffer from thirst before we reach the Powder River. Our camp to-day was in some hills, where we found some stagnant pools; grass very poor; roads very rough; almost impossible to get the trains through, having traveled, as before stated, in a country where no wagons ever passed before. We only passed over ten miles of country, and reached camp at half past one P. M. Teams were doubled up nearly every hill; no wood at this camp.

August 5th. Moved from camp at sunrise, traveled over several little ranges of mountains and made camp at Brown's Springs at ten o'clock A. M. Grass and water excellent. Stock looking well so far, no accidents having happened since we started, of a serious nature. General very vigilant and careful about being surprised; he superintends every movement himself, and is very sanguine that our expedition will be successful. Distance traveled to-day, eight and one-half miles.

August 6th. Left Brown's Springs at six o'clock A. M., Sunday; everything moves off in the usual manner; course to-day is nearly north. Saw Pumpdin Buttes at one o'clock P. M., which the guides say is thirty miles from Powder River. Some careless soldiers fired the grass near our camp last night. The fire, getting beyond our control, serves as a beacon light to the hostiles and gives great uneasiness to our guides, who fear that the Indians will be signalled thereby and may congregate in large numbers—too large for our little command. At the starting of this fire the flames ran across the camp toward two powder wagons. Volunteers from the General's headquarters camp, together with some soldiers, rushed through the fire to the powder wagons and dragged them to a place of safety; in doing so, had to pass over burning grass. To-day, Sunday,

our left flankers killed three buffalo. Made camp on the Dry Fork of the Cheyenne at ten o'clock A. M. Grass and water plenty. No water visible, but any quantity of it within a few feet of the surface in the sandy bed of the river. Empty cracker boxes were sunk in the sand, sand scooped out, and soon water could be dipped up by the bucketful, enough to water all the stock and to supply the camp. The last of the train did not reach camp until dark; distance marched only twelve miles.

August 7th. Broke camp at the usual hour; roads very heavy to-day; distance traveled eighteen miles. The trains did not all arrive in camp until after midnight. Our camp was at some springs in a cozy little valley, where we found plenty of grass and enough wood to cook our buffalo meat. Five buffalo killed and brought in to-day; any quantity of buffalo and antelope in sight on both flanks. Teams gave out to-day, many of the mules refusing to pull.

August 8th was spent in recuperating the stock; not a wheel was turned to-day.

[I refer to my diary, from this date on, for only important events of the expedition. Will not try to record the incidents of each day's march.]

August 9th. We obtained our first view of the Big Horn Mountains at a distance of eighty-five miles northwest, and it was indeed magnificent. The sun so shone as to fall with full blaze upon the southern and southeastern sides as they rose toward Cloud's Peak, which is about ten thousand feet above sea level, and the whole snow-covered range so clearly blended with the sky as to leave it in doubt whether all was not a mass of bright cloud. Although the day was exceedingly warm, as soon as we struck this ridge we felt the cooling breezes from the snow-clad mountains that was most gratefully appreciated by both man and beast. In front and a little to the northeast could be seen the four columns of the Pumpkin Buttes, and, fifty miles further east, Bear Butte, and beyond a faint outline of the Black Hills. The atmosphere was so wonderfully clear

and bright that one could imagine that he could see the eagles on the crags of Pumpkin Buttes, full forty miles away.

August 11th. Broke camp at the usual hour; traveled down Dry Creek; passed two or three mud-holes where the stock were watered. After eight miles marching got to a spot where we could see the long-looked-for Powder River. Saw columns of smoke down the river, indicating an Indian village a few miles away. It proved to be a fire which the hostile Indians had made a day or two before. The Powder River is, at this point, a very rapid stream, water muddy like the Missouri; timber very plenty, ranging back from the river from one-half to one mile; grass not very good, no chance to cut any hay anywhere on the river. Train reached camp at two o'clock and camped in the timber on the river bank. In the evening the General, some members of his staff and the guides, with an escort, went down the river to see if there were any signs of Indians. Found a "good Indian" very lately sewed up in a buffalo skin and hung up in a tree. Many such sights along Powder River. The country traversed by the General was similar to the camp ground.

August 12th. Train remained in camp. An exploring expedition was sent up the river under the command of Lieutenant Jewett, with orders to proceed twenty miles to look for a better location for a military post. Twenty-five of the 6th Michigan Cavalry went up the river with Lieutenant Jewett to the crossing of the old traders' road from the Platte Bridge to the Big Horn Mountains, and past the same, known as the Bozeman Trail, made in 1864 by J. M. Bozeman, of Montana. Lieutenant Jewett found bottoms on both sides of the river banks heavily timbered, flanked by high, bold bluffs, with Indian signs all along the stream—scarcely a mile where there had not been Indian villages, some within a few weeks, some that were probably made years and years ago. Some camps gave evidence that the Indians had very large droves of horses, as the trees were badly girdled. Numerous Indian burial trees were found with lots of "good Indians" tied up

in them. Several bands of buffalo were seen during the day. Lieutenant Jewett returned to camp the same day, having made a fifty mile march.

August 14th. The first timber was cut to-day for building a stockade, the General having decided to erect a fort on the opposite bank of the river at this point, on a large mesa rising about one hundred feet above the level of the river and extending back, as level as a floor, about five miles to the bluffs. A very fine location for a fort, the only disadvantage being scarcity of hay land. Our stockade timber was cut twelve feet long and was from eight to ten inches in thickness. These posts were set four feet deep in the ground in a trench. Every soldier and all the teamsters who could be urged to work, were supplied with axes, and the men seemed to enjoy the exercise, chopping trees and cutting stockade timber.

August 16th. Command still in camp waiting for a train of supplies from Ft. Laramie before we proceed. Indian scouts discovered a war party to-day, and the soldiers gave them a running fight, Captain North's Pawnees in the advance, with only a few staff officers who were smart enough to get to the front with the Pawnees. Captain North followed the Indians about twelve miles without their being aware of our pursuit; then the fun began in earnest. Our war party outnumbered the enemy, and the Pawnees, thirsty for blood and desirous of getting even with their old enemy, the Sioux, rode like mad devils, dropping their blankets behind them, and all useless paraphernalia, rushed into the fight half naked, whooping and yelling, shooting, howling—such a sight I never saw before. Some twenty-four scalps were taken, twenty-four horses captured, and quite an amount of other plunder, such as saddles, fancy horse-trappings and Indian fixtures generally. The Pawnees were on horseback twenty-four hours, and did not leave the trail until they overtook the enemy. There was a squaw with the party; she was killed and scalped with the rest. On their return to camp they exhibited the most savage signs of delight, and if they felt fatigued did not show it; rode with the bloody scalps

ties to the end of sticks, whooping and yelling like so many devils. In the evening they had a war dance instead of retiring to rest, although they had been up more than thirty hours. The war dance was the most savage scene I had ever witnessed. They formed a circle and danced around a fire, holding up the bloody scalps, brandishing their hatchets and exhibiting the spoils of the fight. They were perfectly frantic with this, their first grand victory over their hereditary foe. During the war dance they kept howling, "hoo yah, hoo yah, hoo yah, hoo you," accompanying their voices with music (if such it could be called) made by beating upon an instrument somewhat resembling a drum. No one who has never witnessed a genuine Indian war dance could form any conception as to its hideousness—the infernal "hoo yahs" and din-din of the tom-tom.

These howling devils kept up the dance, first, much to our amusement, until long after midnight, when finally the General, becoming thoroughly disgusted, insisted upon the officer of the day stopping the noise. After considerable talk Captain North, their commander, succeeded in quieting them, and the camp laid down to rest; but this war dance was kept up every night until the next fight, limited, however, to 10 o'clock P. M.

August 19th. Several of the staff officers, myself included, went on a buffalo hunt in the afternoon. We killed several buffalo. One of the scouts reported having seen a large body of Sioux Indians. Captain North started with his company in pursuit; killed one Indian chief and captured six head of horses. Col. Kidd went out in another direction with twenty-five men and reported over five hundred to one thousand Indians. Captain O'Brien and Lieutenant Jewett, with fifteen men, went ten or twelve miles down the river and camped until three o'clock on the morning of the 20th, then struck across the country toward camp, but saw no Indians. Captain Marshall, with forty men of the 11th Ohio, went in pursuit of another band of Indians, killed two Indians and captured eleven head of stock. All of these scouting parties returned to camp; some on the 19th, some not until the 20th.

August 22d. Broke camp at sunrise; started from Powder River going north, leaving part of the train at the fort, also all the 6th Michigan Cavalry. Traveled twenty-three and one-half miles and made camp on Crazy Woman's Fork of the Powder River, so named because of the fact that some fifteen years before, a poor, demented squaw lived near the bank of the river in a "wickiup" and finally died there. The water of this stream is not as good as that of the Powder River, more strongly impregnated with alkali; grass not very good, sage brush abundant, some timber on the stream. Saw some signs of Indians, but none very recent.

August 23d. Left Crazy Woman's Fork at 6 o'clock A. M.; traveled north five miles; came to a dry creek; passed several of the same kind during the day; did not find any running water; stock suffered some for want of same. The country is rolling, still seems more compact and gives us a much better road than we had on the south side of the Powder River. The Big Horn Mountains lying right to our front, seem to be within rifle range, so very near that we could see the buffalo feeding on the foot hills; the pine trees, rocks and crags appear very distinct, though several miles away. Fourteen miles from Crazy Woman's Fork we struck the Bozeman wagon trail, made in 1864. Made camp at three o'clock; grass splendid; plenty of water, clear and pure as crystal and almost as cold as ice. The stream was full of trout, and the boys had a glorious time in the afternoon bathing in the ice water and fishing for trout with hooks made of willows. Several bands of buffalo had been feeding close to camp, and about five o'clock P. M., about twenty-five cavalrymen rode out and surrounded a band and drove them into a corral formed of our wagons, and there fifteen were slaughtered and turned over to the commissary department.

The General and a few of his staff officers, myself included, went up the stream to a high mesa some three miles above camp, and got a beautiful view of the country and the surrounding hills, when we ran upon a monstrous grizzly, who

took shelter in a little plum patch covering about an acre of ground. One of our party, Train-Master Wheeling, with more daring than the rest of us cared to exhibit, rode up within a few rods of the patch, the bear would rush out after him, when he would turn with his mule so quickly that the bear could not catch him, the bear close to his heels snapping and growling, at the same time receiving the fire of our Sharpe's rifles. After receiving same, Mr. Grizzly would retire, and again Wheeling would draw him out of the plum patch, and again we would pour cold lead into his carcass. The fight was intensely interesting. When we downed grizzly we found we had perforated his hide with twenty-three balls. The animal was one of the largest of its species; we agreed that it weighed about eighteen hundred pounds.

From this point on to Montana, in fact along the whole base of the Rocky Mountains to the British Possessions, the country is perfectly charming, the hills all covered with a fine growth of grass, and in every valley there is either a rushing stream or some quiet, babbling brook of pure, clear snow water, filled with trout, the banks lined with trees, wild cherries, quaking asp, some birch, willow and cottonwood. No country in America is more picturesque than the eastern slope of the Big Horn Mountains.

August 25th. Broke camp at the usual hour; pushed on north, passing along the base of the Big Horn Mountains. Crossed several streams, one of which we named Coal Creek, because of the fact that near the center of the stream lay a block of coal about twenty-four feet long, eight feet thick and about twelve feet wide, the water having washed through a vein of coal that cropped out at this point. We found coal here enough to supply our forges and to enable the blacksmith to do some needy repairs. Seven miles from Clear Fork, we came to a very pretty lake about two miles long and about three-fourths of a mile wide, which Major Bridger told us was DeSmedt Lake, named for Father DeSmedt. The lake is strongly impregnated with alkali, in fact, so strong that an egg or potato

will not sink if thrown into the water. Large, red bluffs are to be seen on both sides, and underneath the lake is an immense coal vein. Not many miles from this lake is a flowing oil well. A scheme might be inaugurated to tunnel under this lake, pump the oil into the lake, set the tunnel on fire and boil the whole body of alkali water and oil into soap. Made our camp on the Piney Fork of the Powder River about two or three miles below the present site of Fort McKinney, where there is now a flourishing city known as Buffalo, county seat of Johnson County, Wyoming. Just after we had gone into camp, a large band of buffalo that had been aroused by our flankers, came charging down the hill directly into the camp. Many of them turned aside, but several passed through among the wagons, much to the dismay of our animals, most of which were tied to the same, taking their meal of grain. One monstrous bull got tangled in the ropes of one of our tents, and was killed while trampling it in the dust.

August 26th. Left Piney Fork at six o'clock A. M. Traveled north over a beautiful country until about eight A. M., when our advance reached the top of the ridge dividing the waters of the Powder from that of the Tongue River. I was riding in the extreme advance in company with Major Bridger. We were two thousand yards, at least, ahead of the General and his staff; our Pawnee scouts were on each flank, and a little in advance; at that time there was no advance guard immediately in front. As the Major and myself reached the top of the hill, we involuntarily halted our steeds. I raised my field glass to my eyes and took in the grandest view that I had ever seen. I could see the north end of the Big Horn Range, and away beyond, the faint outline of the mountains beyond the Yellowstone. Away to the northeast the Wolf River Range was distinctly visible. Immediately before us lay the valley of Peno Creek, now called Prairie Dog Creek, and beyond, the Tongue River Valley and many other tributary streams. It was as pretty a picture as I had ever seen. The morning was clear and bright, not a breath of air stirring. The old Major, sitting upon his

horse with his eyes shaded with his hands, had been telling me for an hour or more about his Indian life—his forty years experience on the plains—telling me how to trail Indians and distinguish their tracks from those of different tribes—a subject that I had discussed with him nearly every day. In fact, the Major and myself were close friends. His family lived at Westport, Missouri. His daughter, Miss Jennie, had married a personal friend of mine, Lieutenant Wiseman, and during the winter of 1863 I had contributed to help Mrs. Bridger and the rest of the family, all of which the Major had been acquainted with, which induced him to treat me as an old-time friend. As I lowered my glass the Major said: "Do you see those ere columns of smoke over yonder?" I replied: "Where, Major?" to which he answered: "Over there by that saddle;" meaning a depression in the hills not unlike the shape of a saddle, pointing at the same time to a point fully fifty miles away. I again raised my glass to my eyes and took a long, earnest look, and for the life of me could not see any columns of smoke, even with a strong field glass. The Major was looking without any artificial help. The atmosphere appeared to be slightly hazy in the long distance, like smoke, but there was no distinct column of smoke in sight. Yet, knowing the peculiarities of my frontier friend, I agreed with him that there were columns of smoke, and suggested that we had better get off our animals and let them feed until the General came up. This we did, and as soon as the General with his staff arrived, I called his attention to Major Bridger's discovery. The General raised his field glass and scanned the horizon closely. After a long look he remarked that there were no columns of smoke to be seen. The Major quietly mounted his horse and rode on. I asked the General to look again, that the Major was very confident that he could see columns of smoke, which, of course, indicated an Indian village. The General made another examination and again asserted that there were no columns of smoke. However, to satisfy curiosity, and to give our guides no chance to claim that they had shown us an Indian village and we would not attack it, he suggested to Cap-

tain Frank North, who was riding with the staff, that he go with seven of his Indians in the direction indicated, to reconnoitre and to report to us on Peno Creek or Tongue River, down which we were to march. I galloped on and overtook the Major, and as I came up to him, overheard him remark about "these damn paper collar soldiers" telling him there were no columns of smoke. The old man was very indignant at our doubting his ability to out-see us, with the aid of field glasses even. The joke was too good to keep, and I had to report it to the General. In fact, I don't believe the Major saw any columns of smoke, although it afterwards transpired that there was an Indian village in the immediate locality designated. Bridger understood well enough that that was a favorable locality for Indians to camp, and that at most anytime there could be found a village there. Hence his declaration that he saw columns of smoke.

Our march down Peno Creek was uneventful, the road being very good, much better than we had before found. This stream takes its name from a French trapper by the name of Peno, who had been trapping for beaver. A band of buffalo close by tempted him to take a shot, which he did, slightly wounding a large bull. The bull took after him, and Peno fled for his life. Just as he reached the steep bank of the creek, some fifteen or twenty feet above the stream, Mr. Bull caromed on his rear and knocked Peno clear over the bank headforemost into the creek, the bull tumbling in after him. Fortunately the fall was more disastrous to the bull than to the man, who was able to make his escape. Such is the story as told to me by Major Bridger. Our camp that night was in a valley of the Peno Creek, not far from Tongue River, sixteen miles from Big Piney.

August 27th and 28th. Traveled down Peno Creek and Tongue River; country near the river very barren—no grass. After camping, four of the Omaha scouts went but a short distance from the camp and met a grizzly, which they very imprudently fired upon. The grizzly closed upon them, killing one of

the scouts and fearfully mangling two others before a relief party of the same company could drive away the bear. Just after sunset of this day, two of the Pawnees who went out with Captain North toward Bridger's columns of smoke two days previous, came into camp with the information that Captain North had discovered an Indian village. The General immediately called me to his tent and instructed me to take command of the camp, keeping the wagons in the corral, protect the stock and hold the position until he should return—that he was going out to fight the Indians. I had never been baptized with Indian blood, had never taken a scalp, and now to see the glorious opportunity pass was too much. So, with tears in my eyes, I begged of the General to allow Lieutenant Brewer, of the 7th Iowa Cavalry, who I knew had just reported to me as very sick, to remain with the train and that I be allowed to accompany him in the glorious work of annihilating the savages. The General granted my request. The men were hurried to eat their supper, just then being prepared, and at eight o'clock P. M. we left camp with two hundred and fifty white men and eighty Indian scouts as the full attacking force. From our calculation as to the distance, we expected to strike the village at daylight on the morning of the 29th. Our line of march lay up the valley of the Tongue River, and after we had passed the point where our wagons had struck the stream, we found no road, but much underbrush and fallen timber; and as the night was quite dark, our march was very greatly impeded, so that at daylight we were not within many miles of the Indian village. The General was much disappointed at this delay, which compelled us to keep closely under cover, and in many instances to march along by the water's edge under the river bank in single file, to keep out of the sight of the Indians. I had worked myself to the extreme advance, and like, possibly, many others in the command, had begun to think that there was no Indian village near us, and that we would have no Indians to fight. Arriving at this conclusion, I had become somewhat reckless, and had determined that Captain North,

who had joined our command soon after we left camp, should not reach the village in advance of myself. As we rode along close together conversing, I managed to forge in ahead of him just as we dropped down into a deep ravine; the bank on the side just beyond the stream was much higher than the bank from which we came, and the trail led up this steep bank. As I rode up the bank and came to the top, my eyes beheld a sight as unexpected to me as a peep into sheol. Just before me lay a large mesa, or table, containing five or six hundred acres of land all covered with Indian ponies, except a portion about one-half mile to the left, which was thickly dotted with Indian tepees full of Indians. Without a moment's hesitation, I grasped the bits of my horse with my right hand, and his nostrils with my left, to prevent him from whinnying, threw myself from the saddle, dragging the horse down the bank against Captain North's horse, and whispered to him that we had found the village. Captain North held my horse while I ran back motioning the men to keep still. In fact, the General had issued orders when we left camp, that no man should speak above a whisper, and that when the horses attempted to whinny, they should be jerked up with a tight rein. During the last one-half hour of our march, several men had become somewhat careless, and were not as cautious as they had been during the night. I soon met the General, who was close to the advance, and told him of my discovery. The word was passed back for the men to close up and to follow the General, and not to fire a shot until he fired in advance. General Conner then took the lead; rode his horse up the steep bank of the ravine and dashed out across the mesa as if there were no Indians just to the left; every man followed as closely as possible. At the first sight of the General, the ponies covering the table land in front of us set up a tremendous whinnying and galloped down toward the Indian village. More than a thousand dogs commenced barking, and more than seven hundred Indians made the hills ring with their fearful yelling. It appeared that the Indians were in the act of breaking camp. The most of their tepees were

down and packed for the march. The ponies, more than three thousand, had been gathered in, and most of the warriors had secured their horses; probably half of the squaws and children were mounted, and some had taken up the line of march up the stream for a new camp. They were Arapahoes under Black Bear and Old David, with several other chiefs not so prominent. The General watched the movements of his men until he saw the last man emerge from the ravine, when he wheeled on the left into line. The whole line then fired a volley from their carbines into the village without halting their horses, and the bugles sounded the charge. Without the sound of the bugle there would have been no halt by the men in that column; not a man but what realized that to charge into the village without a moments hesitancy was our only salvation. We already saw that we were greatly outnumbered, and that only desperate fighting would save our scalps. I felt for a moment that my place was with the train; that really I was a consummate fool for urging the General to allow me to accompany him. I was reminded that I had lost no Indians, and that scalping Indians was unmanly, besides being brutal, and for my part I did not want any dirty scalps; yet, I had no time to halt; I could not do it—my horse carried me forward almost against my will, and in those few moments—less than it takes to tell the story—I was in the village in the midst of a hand to hand fight with warriors and their squaws, for many of the female portion of this band did as brave fighting as their savage lords. Unfortunately for the women and children, our men had no time to direct their aim; bullets from both sides and murderous arrows filled the air; squaws and children, as well as warriors, fell among the dead and wounded. The scene was indescribable. There was not much of the military in our movements; each man seemed an army by himself. Standing near the "sweat house," I emptied my revolver into the carcasses of three warriors. One of our men, a member of the 11th Ohio Cavalry, formerly one of John Morgan's men, a fine looking soldier with as handsome a face as I ever saw on a man, grabbed me by the

shoulder and turned me about that I might assist him in withdrawing an arrow from his mouth. The point of the arrow had passed through his open mouth and lodged in the root of his tongue. Having no surgeon with us of a higher grade than a hospital steward, it was afterwards, within a half hour, decided that to get the arrow out of his mouth the tongue must be, and was, cut out. The poor fellow returned to camp with us, and at this late date I am unable to say whether he lived or died. Another man, a sergeant in the Signal Corps, by the name of Charles M. Latham, was shot in the heel. He had been through the entire war in the Army of the Potomac, and wore a medal for his bravery; had passed through many battles and escaped unharmed. This shot in the heel caused his death; he died a few days afterward with lock-jaw. The Indians made a brave stand trying to save their families, and succeeded in getting away with a large majority of their women and children, leaving behind nearly all of their plunder. They fled up a stream now called Wolf Creek, General Conner in close pursuit. Soon after we left the village General Conner advised me to instruct Captain North to take his Indians and get all the stock he could possibly gather. This was done, and with a few stragglers I followed a small band of Indians up the main Tongue River about three miles, until they gathered recruits enough to turn upon us and force us back. General Conner pursued the fleeing savages fully ten miles from camp, when he found himself accompanied by only fourteen men; our horses had all become so fatigued and worn out that it was impossible to keep up. The General halted his small squad and attempted to take the names of his brave comrades, when the Indians, noticing the paucity of his numbers, immediately turned upon him and made a desperate effort to surround him and his small squad of soldiers. They fell back as rapidly as possible, contesting every inch, reinforced every few moments by some stragglers who had endeavored to keep up. With this help they managed to return to camp, where Captain North and myself had succeeded in corralling about eleven hundred

head of ponies. One piece of artillery had become disabled. The axletree of the gun carriage, a mountain howitzer, was broken. We left the wheels and broken axle near the river and saved the cannon. The command rendezvoused in the village and the men were set to work destroying Indian property. Scores of buffalo robes, blankets and furs were heaped up on lodge poles, with tepee covers and dried buffalo meat piled on top, and burned. On one of these piles we placed our dead and burned their bodies to keep the Indians from mutilating them. During our halt the Indians pressed up close to the camp, made several desperate attempts to recover their stock, when the mountain howitzer, under the skillful management of Nick O'Brien, prevented them from completing their aims. Our attack upon the village commenced at nine o'clock A. M. The rendezvous in the village was about half past twelve; we remained there until half past two; in the intervening time we destroyed an immense amount of Indian property—fully two hundred and fifty Indian lodges and contents. At half past two we took up the line of march for the train. Captain North, with his eighty Indians, undertook to drive the stock; they were soon far ahead, while the rest of the force was employed in beating back Indians. The Indians pressed us on every side, sometimes charging up to within fifty feet of our rear guard. They seemed to have plenty of ammunition, but did most of their fighting with arrows, although there were some of them armed with muskets with which they could send lead in dangerous proximity to our men. Before dark we were reduced to forty men who had any ammunition, and these only a few rounds apiece. The Indians showed no signs of stopping the fight, but kept on pressing us, charging upon us, dashing away at the stock, keeping us constantly on the move, until fifteen minutes of twelve o'clock, when the last shot was fired by our pursuers. At this time I had gone ahead to communicate some order from General Conner to Captain North relative to handling the stock. Having completed my work, I halted by the side of the trail and waited for the General, who was with the rear guard.

I remember, as I was getting from my horse, I heard the last shot fired some two or three miles in the rear. After I had dismounted I realized that I was fearfully tired, so tired that I could not stand up. I sat upon the ground, and in a moment, in spite of myself, was in a sound sleep, and was only awakened by being dragged by my horse, which was an Indian pony that I had saddled from the captured stock. Nearly all our men had remounted themselves while we were rendezvousing in the Indian village, otherwise we would not have been able to keep out of the way of the pursuing Indians. My lariat was wrapped around my right arm, and with this the pony was dragging me across the prickly pears when I awakened. Realizing that I was on dangerous ground, I quickly mounted my pony and listened long for the least sound to indicate whether the General had come up or not. There was no noise—not a sound to be heard, the night intensely dark, and myself so bewildered that I scarcely knew which way to go. Again jumping from my horse, I felt with my hands until I found the trail and discovered that the footprints of the horses went in a certain direction. Taking that as my course, I rode away as rapidly as possible, and after three miles hard riding overtook the General and his rear guard, who had passed me while I was asleep. All congratulated me on my rather narrow escape. We arrived at camp at daylight, after marching fully one hundred and ten miles without any rest or refreshments, except the jerked buffalo that the boys had filled their pockets with in the Indian village. The incidents of this fight would make interesting reading. Many acts of personal bravery cannot be recorded. Suffice it to say that every man was a general. Not a command was given by the General after the first order to charge—not a man in the command but that realized that his life was in the balance. We must either whip the Indians, and whip them badly, or be whipped ourselves. We could see that the Indians greatly outnumbered us; that our main dependence was upon our superior equipments; we were better armed than they. As for fighting qualities, the savages proved themselves as brave

as any of our men. The fight commenced at nine o'clock, was offensive until about eleven A. M., when the General was driven back into camp with his small squad of men; from that time until midnight we fought on the defensive. Yet we had accomplished a grand victory. Two hundred and fifty lodges had been burned with the entire winter supply of the Arapahoe band. The son of the principal chief (Black Bear) was killed, sixty-three warriors were slain, and about eleven hundred head of ponies captured. While we were in the village destroying the plunder, most of our men were busy remounting. Our own tired stock was turned into the herd and the Indian ponies were lassoed and mounted; this manœuvre afforded the boys no little fun, as in nearly every instance the rider was thrown or else badly shook up by the bucking ponies. The ponies appeared to be as afraid of the white men as our horses were afraid of the Indians. If it had not been for Captain North, with his Indians, it would have been impossible for us to take away the captured stock, as they were constantly breaking away from us, trying to return toward the Indians, who were as constantly dashing toward the herd in the vain hope of recapturing their stock.

Many exciting scenes were witnessed upon the field of battle. During the chase up Wolf Creek with the General one of North's braves picked up a little Indian boy that had been dropped by the wayside. The little fellow was crying, but when picked up by the soldier Indian fought like a wild-cat. One of our men asked the Indian what he was going to do with the papoose. He said, "Don't know; kill him, mebby." He was told to put him down and not to injure the bright little fellow. The Indian obeyed, and at least one papoose owed his life to the kind-hearted soldier. Several of our men were wounded, some of them quite severely. Three or four afterwards died of their wounds. Two of our soldiers, white men, I forgot their names, were found among the dead, and three or four of North's Indians were killed.

Lieutenant Oscar Jewett, the General's aid-de-camp, the

General's bugler and orderly were among the wounded. Lieutenant Jewett was shot through the thigh and through the hand, and yet was compelled to ride over forty miles after receiving his wounds. We were absent from camp thirty-three hours; had marched, as before stated, one hundred and ten miles; during that time had had nothing to eat, except a few hard tack and some jerked buffalo meat. If there is a better record to the credit of the volunteer cavalry soldier, I am not aware of the fact. We brought back to camp with us eight squaws and thirteen Indian children, who were turned loose a day or two afterward.

August 30th and 31st. We marched twenty-two miles down Tongue River. September 1st, early in the morning, a cannon shot was heard. No two persons could agree in what direction the sound came from, but as this was the day fixed for the general rendezvous of Cole and Conner's command near the mouth of the Rosebud, some eighty miles away, it was supposed that the sound came from that direction. General Conner directed that Captain North, with about twenty of his Indians, and Captain Marshall, with thirty men of the 11th Ohio Cavalry, push on rapidly to the rendezvous to communicate with Cole. Marched fifteen miles September 1st.

September 2d. Did not leave camp until one o'clock P. M. Marched down the river eight miles; valley has narrowed up very much, the country appears rough and irregular. Last night several "medicine wolves" were heard to howl about camp. Ever since we left Ft. Laramie our camp has been surrounded with thousands of wolves, who have made the night hideous with their infernal howling; but not until to-night have we heard the "medicine wolf," which old Bridger claims to be a supernatural sort of an animal, whose howling is sure to bring trouble to camp. Bridger, Nick, Janisse and Rulo, being very superstitious, were so frightened at this peculiar howling, that they took up their blankets and struck out for a new camp, which, according to their theory, was the only way of escaping

from the impending danger; they went down the river about half a mile and camped in the timber by themselves.

September 3d. Has been a cold, dreary day, raining most of the time—some snow. The weather very disagreeable for a mounted man who had to march sixteen miles in the snow and rain.

September 4th. Weather not quite so cold as yesterday—not so disagreeable; country very rough; scarcely any grass, not a spear was seen for miles on the march. Passed down Tongue River; was compelled to cross the stream dozens of times. A messenger from Col. Sawyer's train of emigrants came into camp to-night with the news that his train was attacked by the Indians, supposed to be the same ones that we had fought; that Captain Cole of the 6th Michigan and two of his men were killed; that the train was parked and the men doing their best to defend themselves. From him we learned that Col. Sawyer with about twenty-five wagons and one hundred men were enroute from Sioux City to Bozeman, by way of the Big Horn, or "Bozeman route;" that they had passed over the country by way of the Niobrara, North Fork of Cheyenne, between Pumpkin and Bear Buttes, intersecting with our trail near Ft. Conner; that Col. Kidd, whom we had left in command at Ft. Conner, had sent Captain Cole with twenty men as an additional escort for the train, to help them through the Arapahoe country.

Captain Brown, with two companies of California troops, were hastily detached from our command and marched west about forty miles to relieve the train. When they reached the train they found that the Indians had given up the attack, and on the next day the train pushed on, Captain Brown accompanying them. Our command continued their march fifteen miles down the river.

September 5th. Lay in camp all day waiting for some word from Captain Marshall. The General is very anxious to get some news from the column under the command of Colonel Cole. Captain Marshall's guide returned from the Rosebuds to-night with no news from Cole's command. Captain Marshall

reached camp with his men soon after, having been to the rendezvous and finding no evidence of our supporting column there.

September 6th. The command about-faced to-day, and marched back up the river fifteen miles to find better grass for the stock. A scouting party under Captain North having returned from the mouth of Tongue River on the Yellowstone, and reported no grass and no signs of Cole's command.

September 7th. Marched up the river fourteen miles; found good grass and camped.

September 8th. Captain Frank North, with twenty of the Pawnee scouts, left for Powder River this morning. Captain Humphreyville and a part of his company were ordered to the Rosebuds; small scouting parties were sent in every direction to obtain, if possible, some news of Cole's command. No signs of Indians. Weather very cold and disagreeable.

September 9th. Still raining and snowing; roads are frightfully muddy; almost impossible to move the train; has been raining and snowing for three days.

September 10th. Stopped raining this morning; several mules and horses have died from the effects of the storm. No news from the other column. Tongue River has risen about two feet and we find it impossible to cross.

September 11th. Moved camp one mile up the river to better grass. Captain Humphreyville returned from the Rosebud to-day, reporting no signs of Cole's command. Captain North also returned from Powder River, and reports that he found from five to six hundred dead Cavalry horses, undoubtedly belonging to Cole's command, most of them were found shot at the picket line. From that it appears that Cole has been hard pressed by the Indians, and has been compelled to dismount his men and shoot his horses, the Indians giving them no chance to forage. A large number of saddles and other property had been burned. His trail was well marked and showed that he has pushed on up the river in an opposite direction from the course which he had been ordered to take. This startling news gave evidence that we were nearing the end of our expedition, which we

feared must end disastrously. As acting commissary of subsistence, as well as Quartermaster, I realized that Cole's command must be out of provisions; that they had provisions until only the 3d or 4th of September, when they were supposed to meet our train. That by this time, September 11th, they must be either out of provisions, or that they had been living on half rations for some time previous. The situation was indeed a critical one. Here a superior force had been attacked by the Indians at a point only fifty miles east of us, and had been driven from their line of march to take another route, and had been so hard pressed by the savages that they were compelled to shoot their horses to save them from falling into the hands of the enemy, and to enable the men to do better fighting on foot. Our fighting force was only about four hundred men, counting sixty men with Captain Brown, who was then one hundred miles away; theirs sixteen hundred, four times our number. What would be our fate should these Indians return from the pursuit of Cole, and cross over from the Powder River to Tongue River, and concentrate with the Arapahoes in an attack upon us? We knew, or at least Captain North and his Indians knew, that the Indians who were pressing Cole were the Sioux and Cheyennes, and that they numbered thousands; according to the very best estimate, five or six thousand Indians. Nearly all the men realized that we must be prepared to do some very good fighting; that our only chance of escape from the country depended upon cautious movements as well as good luck.

Early on the morning of September 12th, we took up our line of march for Ft. Conner. By doubling teams, as many as thirty span of mules hitched to several wagons, we managed to drag our loads across the river, and by hard work made twenty miles to-day. Ran across two very large herds of elk that had been driven into the timber by the storm. This morning early, General Conner dispatched one white man, whose name I have forgotten, (it ought to have been preserved, as he was a hero), a member of the 7th Iowa Cavalry, who volunteered to go with five Pawnee Indians at the risk of his life, and join Cole's com-

mand with dispatches from the General, directing Cole to push on up Powder River to Ft. Conner, where he would find supplies for his men, a fact unknown to Colonel Cole.

This move was an important one, and the scouts were instructed to travel only by night and to run the gauntlet at all hazards, otherwise Cole and his men might perish within close proximity to the fort where there was an abundance of supplies, food and ammunition. This party made the trip safely; traveling only by night they managed to reach Cole's camp and to communicate with him, which to his starving troops was glorious news, that if they pushed on rapidly they would find plenty to eat.

September 13th. Continued our march up the river eight and one-half miles, when the teams were so badly played out that we could march no farther.

September 14th. Marched thirteen and one-half miles. Another detachment of scouts, Pawnee Indians under command of Captain North, also Captain Marshall with a small squad of the 11th Ohio Cavalry, were started for Powder River this evening, with instructions to fight their way through to Cole's command. The General is risking our entire force for the salvation of Cole's men. If our force should be attacked now it would be short work for the Indians to massacre the entire party.

September 15th and 16th. Were spent in recuperating our stock, as we found the mules too weak to pull the wagons.

September 17th. Marched up the river fourteen miles and camped. About three o'clock to-day, while the train was crossing the river, experiencing a great deal of trouble, I straggled on ahead of the command to the advance guard beyond. I had my Sharp's rifle with me, and thought I would push on a little further and see if I could not shoot an elk. Crossing over a little divide, I found that to reach the next point of timber I had a bottom of about two miles in width to cross. Not seeing any Indians, or signs of Indians, I very

recklessly gave my fast-walking mule the rein and continued on. Soon after reaching the timber I concluded I was getting too far ahead of the command, led my mule a short distance off the road, tied him to a sapling, took my gun and sat myself on a log, when suddenly I heard the clank of horse's hoofs upon the rocks just ahead of me. Glancing in that direction I saw just before me a party of Indians. I sprang to my feet and raised rifle, as they pulled their reins, having noticed me; just at that moment the face of a white man appeared behind the Indians, and they threw up their hands to show that they were friendly. The white man, who proved to be Lieutenant Jones, of the 2d Missouri Artillery, rode up. He was from Cole's command, and had been sent by Cole with the five Indians to communicate with General Conner the safe arrival of our scouts, and that he would push on to Ft. Conner. Jones had left Cole's command in an opposite direction from the Indians; had gone around them, discovered our trail near Big Piney, and followed down Peno Creek to Tongue River to the point where we met. I was so rejoiced at hearing from Cole's command that I could scarcely keep back the tears, and when I rode back to the train the news set the men wild with joy. Cole's command had been found. Lieutenant Jones reported that soon after passing to the right of the Black Hills they were attacked by the Sioux, who had continued to fight them from that time until they reached Tongue River. By that time their stock had become so worn out for want of feed that they were compelled to shoot many of their horses and burn up a large supply of saddles, stores and accoutrements, and to turn from their course towards the Wolf Mountains and the Rosebuds, the country before them being so rough that they could not drag their wagons after their command. Col. Cole, being so early surrounded by Indians, made up his mind that General Conner's command must have been massacred, and that if he ever reached the Rosebuds he would then be in a more dangerous position than he was east of Wolf Mountains; that his only chance for escape now would be in marching up Powder River, making his way, if pos-

sible, to Ft. Laramie. Several of his men had been wounded by the Indians, and for several days the men had to subsist on mule meat, being absolutely out of provisions.

September 18th and 19th. We continued our march up the river, camping on the 19th on Peno Creek, three miles above our old camp. Large bands of elk passed the command to-day, and several of them were halted by our bullets.

September 20th. Continued our march up Peno Creek sixteen miles.

September 21st. The command marched twenty-one miles to-day. Just before we left camp this morning, I prevailed upon the General to allow Lieutenant Jewett, Captain Laurant and myself, with three men, to ride two or three miles to the right of the command, to the front of the right flankers, to give us an opportunity to kill some elk; the country seemed full of them. The General made us promise that we would keep together, and, being well armed, we might fight off the Indians if they should attack us and make our way back to the train. We extended our ride some two or three miles to the right of the line of march, and out of sight of the train in the foothills on the mountains. About 8 o'clock we ran across a large band of buffalo, and as we were out upon a hunt, dashed among them to see how many we could kill. I took after a fine bull, one of the best in the herd, who with a small band of buffalo struck up a ravine. It was short work to down the fellow and cut out his tongue as a trophy and to remount, when I discovered that there was not one of the party in sight; I was entirely alone. I rode up on a hill, expecting to see the party a short distance away, but saw nothing except here and there a buffalo, all on the gallop, and here and there an antelope. Thinking I was pretty close to the men, I pushed on in my regular course south, parallel to the train, dropping a little to the left, expecting soon to come in sight of the wagons. After riding about half a mile and reaching the top of a little ridge, I discovered, just before me, an antelope so very close that I could not resist the temptation to chance a shot. Jumping from my pony, which, by the

way, was a wild Indian pony captured out of the herd a day or two before, I threw the lariat over my arm, raised the gun and fired. The pony made a jump and dragged the rope through my hands, blistering them very badly, and escaped, galloping off in an opposite direction from the course I was traveling. My first impulse was to fire at the pony to save my saddle and other accoutrements; turning, I saw that I had shot the antelope and that he was getting onto his feet again. As he was so close by I dropped my gun on the ground, pulled my revolver, ran up towards the antelope and fired as I ran. The antelope gained his feet and started down the slope. I had fired the last shot from my revolver and had no time to reload, and as I had wounded the antelope continued the pursuit. For nearly a half a mile I followed the antelope in a winding course, until, finally, he fell to the ground in his death struggles. I cut his throat and took the saddle—the two hind quarters. Started back to the hill to get my gun; found I was on the wrong hill. Was finally compelled to return to the carcass of the antelope and retrace my steps to where I fired at the antelope, tracking my way by the blood. This work delayed me fully an hour, but I was rewarded by finding the gun. Then, as I was so far behind the train, (it was now 10 o'clock), I concluded it to be dangerous to attempt to follow it and as I was afoot my only salvation was in keeping at least four miles to the right of the train, away from the Indians who would probably follow the train, and to make camp in the night time. I hung on to the saddle of antelope and with my gun took up the tramp. After walking two or three miles I came to a ridge overlooking a little valley and in the valley saw a horse, which, upon closer inspection, I determined to be my own horse, which had by a roundabout course struck the valley ahead of me. The animal was feeding by himself, not another animal in sight. I resolved at once to make an effort to re-capture the horse. Slipping down to the creek I deposited my gun and antelope meat in the limb of a dead cottonwood and commenced crawling through the grass, which was very high and fine, towards the

horse. After more than an hour's work, slowly dragging myself along, I just managed to get hold of the end of the rope but not with sufficient grip to hold the startled pony who again escaped from me. This only aggravated me and made me resolve that I would have the pony or die trying. One, two, and more than three hours were passed before I could again get hold of the rope; and finally, it was about 4 o'clock P. M. when I managed to capture the pony. I had worked up the valley three or four miles above where I had left the antelope meat and my gun, but after I had mounted my pony it was a short ride back to these articles, and, after lunching, I took up my line of march for the camp and without further incident of importance reached the camp at daylight next morning; having gone fifteen miles out of my way to avoid the possible chance of running upon the Indians. The other members of the party had joined the camp about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and after 9 o'clock that night nearly every man in the camp had given me up for dead.

September 22d. Captain Marshall and a detachment of his company, came from Ft. Conner with a letter to General Conner with the news that he had been relieved of the command of the District of the Plains; that Col. Cole, with his two regiments of Missouri troops and the 16th Kansas Cavalry, had reached Ft. Conner in a very destitute condition, half of the men barefoot, and that for fifteen days they had had no rations at all and had subsisted entirely upon what little game they could get close to camp, and on mule meat; and that they had been obliged to burn a large portion of their train, together with camp equipage.

September 23d. Camped on Crazy Woman's Fork, and on September 24th reached Ft. Conner, having traveled twenty-five miles to-day. The General and staff reached the fort about eleven A. M.; train got in just before sundown.

Cole's command looked as if they had been half starved, and are very ragged and dirty; the men resemble tramps more than they do soldiers. They have had little but suffering since

they left the Platte River, and are as completely disgusted and discouraged an outfit of men as I ever saw. They report having fought the Indians six days on the Powder River, and claim they killed three or four hundred of them. This day's march ends the story of the Powder River Indian Expedition. General Conner will return with a small escort of men, leaving the command of the expedition to Col. Cole, who will make his way back to the States by slow marches. General Frank Wheaton has been assigned to the command of the District of the Plains, and we expect to meet him at Ft. Laramie.

I persuaded General Conner to allow me to take back to Ft. Laramie the captured stock, that he might have credit therefor.

On the 26th of September the General pushed out for Laramie with three ambulances, Captain North and his Indians driving the stock. The General remained at Ft. Laramie until October 4th, when I received receipts from Captain Childs for six hundred and ten head of horses, all that had been saved out of the eleven hundred head captured from the Indians. Horses had escaped from us every day on the march, and during the storm on Tongue River several had perished. On our march up Tongue River at least three or four hundred made their escape, at one time a band of more than forty in one drove. In the four days lay-over at Ft. Laramie I had completed my reports to the quartermaster and commissary departments, receiving the General's approval on all my papers, and his thanks for services rendered, and was enabled to accept his invitation to a seat in the ambulance, and rode with him to Denver, where we had been invited by the citizens to a reception in honor of General Conner. We left Ft. Laramie with an escort of twenty men who accompanied us as far as Ft. Collins; from that point we pushed on to Denver without any escort, arriving there about the 15th of October. We were received with all the honors that could be bestowed; a grand feast was prepared for us at the Planters' Hotel, and the best people of Denver, almost en masse, turned out to the reception.

The next day we were escorted by more than thirty carriages, filled with prominent citizens, to Central City, forty miles away in the mountains, where we were again received and toasted in the most hospitable manner. I returned to Denver in time to leave on the first coach that had been started from Denver for three weeks. Captain Sam. Robbins and Captain George F. Price (who had been Chief of Cavalry for the General, and whom he had left at Ft. Laramie in charge of the office as Adjntant General of the District of the Plains while we were on the expedition), together with Bela M. Hughes, Attorney General of Ben. Holliday's overland mail line, and two Pacific Railroad exploring engineers, with Johnnie Shoemaker as messenger, who had with him \$250,000 in treasure, were fellow passengers. We left Denver at ten A. M., October 19th; met with no incidents of an exciting nature until we reached Larry Hay's ranch about daylight the second day out. Just as we were driving up to the station we heard the roar of musketry and the infernal yells of the Indians, who had attacked a train camped close to the station. The chief wagon master, Wells, of Ft. Lupton, was killed in this attack. I had just climbed out of the coach to a seat with the driver. Johnnie Shoemaker was in the boot asleep, and every one in the coach was asleep except the driver and myself. I had remarked to the driver that it was daylight, and asked him how far it was to the station; he said it was close by, a mile or two ahead. Just then we heard the firing; the driver whipped his six mules into a run and away we went pell mell for the station, expecting momentarily the arrows and leaden messengers of death. Fortunately for us, the Indians were on the opposite side of the station, and, before we had reached the same, had been driven away by the teamsters and wagon men. At O'Fallen's Bluff, near Baker's Ranch, we were again attacked by the Indians and ran into the station, where we defended ourselves until morning.

Next day pushed on with the coach with all the passengers on foot as an advance guard and flankers. Fortunately for us

two companies of a West Virginia cavalry regiment were on the line of march up the Platte and happened to meet us in the worst part of the hills. Their presence had driven away the Indians and we were enabled to drive through the bluffs in safety. This is the last incident worthy of record of the Powder River Indian Expedition.

As a summary of general results I can only say that, even with the disastrous ending of Cole's expedition, the Powder River Indian Expedition of 1865 was not a failure. The General's plan to "carry the war into Egypt" succeeded admirably; the warrior element, by the movement of these columns, were compelled to fall back upon their villages to protect their families, and during the progress of the campaign the overland line of travel became as safe as before the Indian outbreak.

It was not until General Conner retraced his steps, by order of the War Department, back to Laramie, with all the soldiers, that the Indians, thinking that he had voluntarily retired from their front again hastened to the road, passing General Conner's retiring column to the east of his line of march, and again commenced their devilish work of pillage, plunder and massacre.

General Conner's ability, sagacity and courage, and best of all, his success as an Indian fighter remains unchallenged in all the western country. His early schooling in Indian wars especially fitted him to become, as he was, the "big medicine man" of their hereditary foe.

General Patrick Edward Conner first enlisted in the regular army November 29th, 1839; was discharged November 29th, 1844; was commissioned Colonel 3rd California Infantry Volunteers, September 29th, 1861; fought the famous Bear River fight (263 dead Indians to tell the tale) January 29th, 1863; was promoted Brigadier General March 29th, 1863; fought the battle of Tongue River August 29th, 1865; promoted Brevet Major General for gallant and meritorious conduct March 29th, 1866. This grand old warrior was a captain of volunteers in the Mexican war, was three times severely wounded, and is

drawing a pension for his disability. He was stationed at Council Bluff's, a member of the 4th Dragoons, in 1840, forty-seven years ago.

Captain Price is now Captain in the 5th U. S. Cavalry; Captain Sam. Robbins is dead; Laurant was last heard of in New Orleans; Lieutenant Jewett is at Saginaw, Michigan; Captain Brown, of the 2d California, is now in the general office of the Southern Pacific Railroad at San Francisco; Captain Conrad and Captain North, also Lieutenant Brewer, are numbered among the dead; Captain O'Brien is living in Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory; Lieutenant Ware edits the Fort Scott Monitor, in Kansas; Lieutenant J. Willard Brown, of the signal corps, is at West Medford, Massachusetts; Lieutenant A. V. Richards, of the same detachment, lives at Dubuque, Iowa. Captain W. H. Tubbs, A. C. S., who remained with Colonel Kidd at Ft. Conner, lives at New London, Connecticut; Colonel N. ~~C.~~ Cole is Dep't Commander G. A. R. of Missouri, lives at St. Louis, and General Conner spends most of his time at San Francisco, California.

H. E. PALMER,
Late Captain Company A, 11th K. V. C.,
Plattsmouth, Neb.

ADDENDA.

OF THE BIG HORN COUNTRY.—Let the fact be recorded that General Conner led the first military expedition into this region. Traders and trappers had been there. James Bridger was there in 1830, his eighth year on the plains. Maleom Clark was there in 1841. Sir Geo. Gore passed through on an exploring expedition in 1854. J. M. Bozeman and John M. Jacobs, accompanied only by Jacobs' little ten-year-old daughter, passed by the eastern base of the Big Horn Mountains from Montana to the States in 1863. Bozeman returned as the captain of a large emigrant train in 1864, and made the first wagon trail. Captain Jas. Stnart, brother of Granville Stnart, so well known in Montana, led a party of fourteen men, viz: Cyrus D. Watkins, John Vanderbilt, Jas. N. York, Richard McCafferty, Jas. Hanxhurst, Drewyer Underwood, Ephraim Bostwick, Sam'l T. Hanser (late Governor of Montana), Henry A. Bell, Wm. Roach, A. S. Blake, Geo. H. Smith, Henry T. Gerry and George Ives—prospectors searching for gold. A chapter, aye, a book, properly written, detailing the varied experiences, both thrilling and exciting, fights with Indians, with grizzly bears, the chase for buffalo, antelope, deer, elk and other game that had never before heard the crack of a rifle or listened to the music of a musket ball (the Indians, until after 1863, scarcely ever used a gun on their hunts, correctly agreeing that the use of fire-arms would frighten the game and make the chase more difficult; consequently they

relied almost entirely on the bow, arrow and spear) would make a story as interesting as the Arabian Nights, if not exactly on that order.

OF THE GAME.—We found it an easy matter to ride up within fifteen or twenty rods of a band of buffalo before they would seamper off, and the strange sight of a moving train, signal flags, and the large column of cavalry, so excited the antelope and deer that they could, at almost any hour of the day, be seen on neighboring hills, sometimes in close proximity to the train. It was a very easy matter to ride up within good revolver range of an antelope. Members of the signal corps enjoyed themselves hugely by hiding behind some little hillock or clump of sage brush and signaling to the Indians, confiding antelope to come up and smell of their pistols. While on this subject I will state as a matter of truth and history that our entire command, the left column of the Powder River Indian Expedition, numbering with officers, soldiers, teamsters and other employes over 900 souls, from August 10th to September 25th, depended entirely on wild game for meat, some bacon was used for grease only, and out of 226 head of beef cattle that were driven along for the commissary department, only three were slaughtered, and those because the animals had become footsore and could not keep up with the column. Fifteen buffalo were driven into the wagon corral and killed at our camp on Clear Fork of Powder River August 24th, and at one camp five grizzly bears were slaughtered. Men on the march would, with their revolvers, without danger to the flankers who were at least a mile away, pick up antelope and occasionally the more cautious deer every day, enough to satisfy the mess cook.

A chapter giving but two days' experience, May 13th and 14th, 1863, of Captain Stuart's party of prospectors, is but a fair sample sheet of such a book (my own experience in 1866, next year after General Connor's expedition, after my muster out of service, when I tried to become the first white settler in the Big Horn country, and did build the first house there; lost four teams, \$6,000 worth of goods and was held a prisoner in "Old

Davy's" tepee on Little Big Horn, near where Custer lost his life ten years later). Governor Hauser, of Stuart's party, kept a diary, and at the risk of becoming wearisome I quote from his report to the Montana Historical Society. Governor Hauser says, speaking of Captain Stuart: "As an illustration of his sagacity and mountaineer knowledge, I would state before going into the details of that dreadful night, that, as we were riding along the day before, he remarked that we were being dogged by a war party. As I had seen no Indians nor signs of any, I asked him how he knew. He replied, 'Do you see those buffalo running at full speed off there next to the mountains?' Looking in that direction some six or eight miles I saw what he described, and answered that I did; 'Well,' said he, 'you will shortly see those others a couple of miles or so ahead of them start also.' Sure enough in the course of about half an hour they too stampeded, thus showing clearly that they were frightened by something traveling in the same direction as we were, and it was also evident that it was something beyond them, for they all ran toward us. This convinced me that he was correct, and after he had explained and drawn my attention to the circumstance it was easy enough to comprehend.

Reaching the spot selected for camp, we busied ourselves with our various duties—some preparing supper, others starting off with pick, pan and shovel to prospect, etc., but I noticed that the captain quietly took his rifle and started off alone for the rolling hills next to the mountains. In about an hour he returned, and, throwing down a pemmican, remarked: "Those thieving scoundrels are close around here, so close that in their haste to keep me from seeing them they dropped that, and if we don't look sharp we will get set afoot to-night."

As night approached it clouded up and threatened rain, so we carried in all our flour and most of our baggage, saddles, etc., and placed them around next the walls of our tents, making our beds inside of this circle, which proved to be a providential act.

Night coming on, the captain remarked that there would

have to be a sharp watch kept, as he felt confident the Indians would make an attempt to get our horses, and said he would go on guard himself. As it grew dark we all retired to rest, except the two guards, without any misgivings, for during the last three weeks the Indians had been around our tents nearly every night, trying to steal our horses, and as they had never attempted to fire into or molest us since our first meeting, when we stood them off, we had ceased to have any apprehension that they would attack us. The only precaution we took (that of taking our rifles and revolvers to bed with us) was to be ready in case they attempted to stampede our horses by dashing in among them.

The only one who seemed to have any premonition of the coming tragedy was Watkins, who, several times during the day, had called my attention to the mournful cooing of a dove, saying that it made him sad and caused him to think of his boyhood days and of his mother's home, and that he couldn't get over it, etc. It was strange to hear him talk in this strain for he was the most reckless of the party and usually did not seem to think of home, death or anything else. Drew Underwood and I slept under the same blankets, and in the same tent were also York and McCafferty. Gerry, Bostwick, Ives and Watkins occupied a tent, as did also Bell, Vanderbilt, Blake and another, while Hauxhurst and Roach did not put up any tent, but simply spread it over their bed.

We all fell asleep without fear, having been accustomed to having Indians around our camp, trying to steal our horses only, as we had learned to suppose, when I was startled by the captain shouting, 'Keep close to the ground!' Instantly following his voice came the most unearthly yelling and firing that I had ever heard, and that so very close that the crash seemed directly against my head and inside the tent. I was fairly lifted to a sitting position, and my first realization of what was the matter was hearing Underwood say, 'I'm shot through and through.' 'My God, this is awful,' was my reply, adding instantly, 'So am I,' for feeling the shock and sting of the ball,

and blood trickling down my side, I thought it was all over with me. Hurriedly thrusting my hand under my shirt, I drew a sigh of relief, for I found that the ball had not gone through me, it having struck a thick memorandum book that was in my left shirt pocket, which it passed through and flattened and stopped against a rib near my heart.

Instantly seizing our rifles we crawled out of the tent, but before we got out the yelling and firing had ceased. It was pitch dark, dark as Egypt, and what followed was even more trying to our nerves than what had passed. We could distinctly hear the demon-like whisperings of the murderous fiends in the ravine that we knew was not more than ten paces from us, yet so perfectly dark was it that we could not see even the outlines of the bushes that bordered the ravine; in fact we could not see our hands before us. Add to this that we did not know how many of our little band were left alive. Some we knew were dying, from the moans we heard, yet we could not see them or offer a word of consolation, for one audible word would have brought a shower of arrows. As it was, they were flying in all directions, and it seemed impossible to escape being pierced by them. We could hear them whizzing through the air every second and so near that we often felt the wind; and so close were the Indians that we could hear them twang their bowstrings. Too shrewdly, the cowardly murderers had resorted to their bows and arrows after they had emptied their double-barreled guns, knowing well that if they used their guns after we were aroused, that the flash would afford us a mark to return their fire; but arrows gave no guide, and they were safe in the ravine and darkness.

Crawling to our captain as best we could, constantly admonished by the flying arrows to crawl low, we found him lying between and among five dead horses, all shot by the Indians in their efforts to kill him, guided by his voice when he had shouted to us to "keep close to the ground," an order given upon his hearing them cocking their guns just before they fired; which order was given at the imminent risk of his own life, but

it saved ours, which was always the aim of his big heart at any risk, and as fortune sometimes favors the brave so in this instance she did him, for the dead horses furnished him a complete barricade from which he whispered his directions to us. On reaching him I asked, in a suppressed whisper, how many men were killed. "Don't know, you are the third man that has reported," he said. To which I replied, "Great God, Jim, this is awful." He answered, "Never mind; it is rough but we will give them a gaine yet. You and Underwood crawl toward the river about fifty yards, don't fire until you can punch your guns against them. Wait; there will be a general rush on us before morning. Remember, don't shoot until the rush is made and you can touch them with your guns. If you fire sooner the flash of your guns will direct a hundred shots to yon. Keep cool and we can stand them off." So Underwood and I dragged ourselves over the horses and for the distance indicated, requiring no further orders to keep close to the ground for the whiz of arrows made us lie flatter than ever, if possible. And here we lay, face downward, for three long hours, with cocked rifle in one hand and revolver in the other, in the most fearful suspense expecting every moment that they would renew their yells and rush upon us. With every nerve strained we watched and waited, with nothing to relieve our suspense except the gratitnde we felt at being still alive and the hope of succoring our wounded comrades, whose dying groans were perfectly heartrending. Add to this the audible whisperings of what we supposed to be directions and preparations for the final charge and the pecnliar, never-to-be-forgotten sound of the arrows which we heard but could not see, each one so close that we felt that the next one mnst strike. Yet we dare not fire in return, only wait for what seemed inevitable death. In this way hours passed—hours that seemed weeks—when, to my utter snrprise, our captain came, walking erect and almost stumbling over me. In a whisper I said, "What are yon walking for; why don't you get down and crawl? Yon will be killed." To which, in the same whispered tone he replied, "Oh, I'm going around to see

how the boys are and to get some water for Bell and Bostwick. There's enough of us left to give them a lively rattle in the morning." At that moment an arrow came so close we could actually feel the wind of it. I again appealed to him to crawl. His answer was: "I was not born to be killed by these red devils," and he calmly walked down to the river and got a cup of water and took it to the wounded men, and to this day God only knows why he was not pierced by a dozen arrows, and it seems almost a miracle that he was not.

Underwood was not more than four feet from me and yet we never dared speak, only watched and tried to see through the darkness and prayed for morning or light enough to see to shoot. Yet, what were we to hope for with the coming of daylight? We knew that they were ten to one against us. Still, it would be better than the great disadvantage at which they had us. And the uncertainty! Anything was better than that.

Morning came at last, and what a sight it revealed! There was poor Watkins, shot through the temple and unconscious, but crawling around on his elbows and knees; Bostwick, shot all to pieces but still alive, and five others wounded; the men scattered all about the camp ground, face downward, with cocked rifles and revolvers in hand eagerly watching the bushes and ravine from which the fatal fire had come. Five horses were dead and six or seven others had arrows sticking into them. On the side of the mountain in plain sight were the Indians moving around among the trees and rocks. With the approach of day the cowardly wretches had quietly retreated up the ravine to the side of the mountain out of danger, yet keeping in sight so as to watch our every movement. We were in a most trying and desperate situation, surrounded by merciless Indians, hundreds of miles from the nearest white men, with the whole tribe between us and our home and with seven of our little band wounded, two fatally and three others severely.

We gathered into a little knot to talk over the events of the night, and to ascertain the extent of our wounds. This done, I asked Jim. (as our captain was familiarly called among us)

what we had better do. He answered, "Have a hot cup of coffee first; we will all feel better, and will then decide."

I forgot to mention that just at break of day, and as we were about rising to our feet, an Indian sent an arrow right into our midst, but from a greater distance up the ravine. Jim instantly seized his rifle and started to cut him off from the mountain by getting between him and those above, but he proved too quick and escaped. According to instructions we proceeded to make a fire and prepare some coffee, although none of us felt like either eating or drinking.

Within a radius of thirty or forty feet of where Underwood and I had been lying, I picked up forty-eight arrows, and the tents were completely riddled. Probably three hundred balls and arrows passed through them.

Having drank our coffee, we held a council of war, or rather got together to hear what Jim suggested, which was that it would be hopeless to try to return to Bannack the way we had come, as we would not only have the blood-hounds up on the side of the mountains after us, but the whole Crow nation that we had passed three weeks before. Therefore, we would have to return by the way of the South Pass and Ft. Bridger, although it was some ten or twelve hundred miles and part of it over a totally unexplored country, inhabited by the hostile Sioux, which fact, Jim said, 'would prevent the red devils up there,' pointing to them, 'from following us more than seventy-five or a hundred miles, and we might, by a scratch, miss the others.'

The route being decided upon, we determined to wait till noon or later to see the last of poor Watkins, Bostwick and Bell, by which time we thought they would breathe their last. The other wounded we thought could all ride. We decided that we would throw away all of our outfit but five or six days' rations, to lighten up the packs for the purpose of riding our horses seventy-five miles the first twenty-four hours, the object being to get the Indians following us too far from their main camp to return for reinforcements, should they succeed in sur-

rounding us and compelling us to entrench ourselves. Jim then said it was important to show the Indians that we had 'good medicine, and that our hearts were not on the ground,' by challenging them then and there for a fight, stating that he didn't know whether they would fight or not, 'but that if they were Bannacks or Snakes they would give us a brush,' but that 'he was not familiar enough with the Crows to know whether they would or not; but if they would we might as well fight them there as anywhere, and it would have a good effect on them in their future attacks.' We then proceeded to throw away all but six days' rations and a few other necessary articles, and, being all ready to start, we prepared for the fight. But before going out Geery, Underwood and myself, who belonged to the 'fraternity,' had a little side-talk, which resulted in each one declaring that if he got mortally wounded he would reserve one shot that should prevent unnecessary sacrifice of the party by remaining to defend a man that must soon die anyway, and also to prevent torture if captured. In order to ascertain when we were mortally wounded, we agreed to have Jim examine and decide. On the other hand, we agreed to remain by and defend each other as long as there was hope of the wounded man living. This understood, we talked it over with Jim and, finally, with all the rest, who all came to the same agreement.

This fearful determination was prompted by our desperate situation, as it then seemed impossible for any of us to escape; but we all had a great desire for some of the party to do so, and report where, when and how we had died. We felt absolutely desperate and reckless, yet determined that some of us should live to report our fate, if a brave resistance could do it.

I doubt if there was a single one who thought he would be the fortunate one to escape, but there was no desponding or lamenting—all were resolved to die fighting. Our captain said he thought about half of us might live to tell the tale by keeping cool, sticking close together, and every man doing his duty. All being ready, we started in single file for an elevated plateau about three hundred yards off, and diagonally toward the In-

dians. A forlorn hope, indeed, but resolute and determined. Arriving at the place he had selected for the fight, our captain went through the whole manual of signs, calling them eowards, thieves, murderers, and everything else, and defied them to come down and fight us. At first they signalled an acceptance, and began moving around as though they were coming, but finally settled down behind rocks and trees, evidently concluded they would wait a better chance. After waiting until satisfied they would not come, we returned to camp. It was now about three P. M., and Jim said we would soon have to start. Bell had given up all his valuables and given me directions what to do with his property if I escaped, but when Jim felt his pulse he expressed surprise at not finding him sinking, yet, from the nature of his wounds, he could not hope for his life. On asking him if he thought he could ride, he expressed a willingness to try, saying he might go a little ways at any rate. While helping Bell on a horse, poor Bostwick blew his brains out. Geery, who was sleeping with him, said that when Bostwick found he was shot, he asked him (Geery) to eock his revolver and put it in his right hand, stating that he wanted to sell his life as dearly as possible; that he had not long to live, but would save some of the Indians. He was sinking rapidly and refused to let us try to put him on a horse, saying that it was utterly useless, and would increase his sufferings for nothing, as it was impossible for him to live. This was some time before, and the report of his pistol surprised me, as I supposed him to be in a dying condition.

Succeeding at last in getting Bell on a horse, we moved off slowly, as of course he could not go fast. Riding up to Jim, I said I believed Bell would live. To which he replied he feared not; that it was only a spasmodic effort, and that he would probably fall dead off his horse within an hour or so.

As we began to move the Indians mounted their ponies and moved along parallel to us, but out of gunshot. Bell apparently got stronger, and when we reached a little stream about five miles from our camp, Jim called a halt for consulta-

tion and a further examination of Bell's pulse and wounds. After which he announced that there was a show for his life; therefore, we would camp right there and then, and give Bell a chance to recruit up, adding that we would stay by him at all hazards, so long as there was hope for his life, but that it would now be impossible for us to go more than fifteen or twenty miles a day. This was a serious and desperate change in our plans, as we had thrown away nearly all our provisions, expecting to go seventy-five miles in the first twenty-four hours, and thus get beyond reinforcements to, and possibly out of reach of, the Indians, who were at that moment gathering about us on the hills. Still the men all cheerfully and heartily endorsed the captain's resolution, and we accordingly halted and remained some two or three hours, getting supper and allowing Bell to rest.

May 14th. Traveled twenty miles toward nearly all points of the compass; general course west, twenty-five degrees south. Very rough mountain all day; had difficulty in getting through the snow. After going five miles we stopped at a spring for breakfast, and then twelve miles more, and after a very difficult and tedious descent into a gorge to get water, we halted about 4 P. M. to get supper. All of us were intensely wearied and worn out. A few men were thrown out as pickets and the rest were busied in unpacking, when, in the midst of our preparations for supper and rest, York announced that he saw Indians approaching on the points above us. All hands flew to arms, but were startled and checked by the report of a rifle right in our midst. We knew it must be one of our own guns, but whether accidentally or purposely discharged we did not at first know; but, looking inquiringly around, all eyes at last centered upon Geery, who, with a deathly pallor on his face, stood erect, but his body partly leaning against his rifle. He answered our looks by answering: 'I have foolishly but accidentally destroyed my life.' Rushing up to him, we eased him down to a sitting posture. He then, with great deliberation and calmness, opened the bosom of his shirt, and pointing to the ghastly wound

about three inches above his left nipple, said: 'My life is fast ebbing away—only a few hours more; but that is too long for you all to remain here. See, the sun is fast declining behind the mountains; the Indians will soon be upon you and it would be impossible to defend yourselves in this place. Jim, tell the boys I am fatally wounded.' This request but too plainly indicated his dreadful resolution, and too soon brought us to an awful realization of our desperate but determined agreement on the morning after the attack, and we all appealed to him not to think of so rash an act, telling him that he might live, and using every argument that we could think of, collectively and individually begging him not to think of such a thing. During the whole time he held his revolver firmly grasped in his right hand, and warned us that any attempt to take it from him would only hasten his action. No one attempted to force it away from him; we only reasoned, or tried to reason, with him, but we could not make him lose sight of the inevitable fact that he must die within a few hours anyhow, but that in the meantime darkness would be upon us, and with it the Indians, who were already approaching us, and whom we could not successfully resist in such a place. Finally he called upon Jim again to 'tell the truth; tell the boys I can't live over a few hours at most.' Jim, who was in tears, and his big heart almost breaking, could not truthfully answer him in the negative; therefore he evaded a direct reply by answering: 'Never mind, Geery, we will stay by you; all the Indians in the world cannot drive us away from yon.'

This reply only seemed to fix the resolution in his noble soul to do what he probably knew would save the party, or most of them; yet how few men there are who could so reason and act under such circumstances. Turning to us he said: 'See, comrades; Jim knows that I am fatally wounded and must die soon, but he avoids telling me; and the fact that you would all, I know, stay by me and die for me, has determined me. Remember (putting the muzzle of the pistol against his breast), I am not committing suicide. Bear witness to my friends that

I am only shortening my life a few hours to prevent you from uselessly and foolishly sacrificing yours in defense of mine. God knows that I don't want to die, that I fear death, but have a Christian hope in eternity; yet must die, rather to save than to sacrifice. Remember this gorge in the mountains and the spot where I am buried; describe it to my friends some day, if you ever live to tell of it.' Those strong men were all weeping over him as he continued: 'God bless you all, comrades; I must die, and in time for you to bury me and escape before dark. Bury me in this coat and here.' He was about to fire the fatal shot when Jim said: 'For God's sake, Geery, don't; but if you will do it, don't shoot yourself there; it will only prolong the agony (the muzzle of the pistol, as before stated, was against his breast). If you must do it, place the pistol to your temple.' To which Geery replied: 'Thanks, Jim, and may God bless you all and take you safely out of this.' As he placed his pistol to his temple the men, with weeping eyes and full hearts, all turned to walk away, as they could not bear to see him fire. He pressed the trigger and the cap only exploded. I never heard one sound so loud before; it echoed in all directions, as if to make him realize what he was doing. I then appealed to him, saying: 'Geery, for God's sake desist; this is a warning.' To which he paid no attention, but rather seemed to be soliloquizing, and said: 'I know not what to think of that; it never snapped before.' Cocking his pistol again, he engaged a few seconds in mental prayer, and again pulled the trigger that launched him into eternity. The report of the fatal shot was awful and sent a thrill through our swelling hearts that will never be forgotten.

We gathered around his dying form, and it was indeed a fearful thing to see the human soul take wing, especially as he had so nobly died to save us. Never before had I seen our little band give way; they all wept like children, and seemed far more disheartened than the morning after the massacre.

Waiting some half hour after he had drawn his last breath, we buried him, as he desired, in his soldier overcoat.

We had scarcely finished his burial when the pickets announced that the Indians were approaching us and were within gunshot, yet there was no firing.

After our last sad duty was finished, Jim directed us to pile limbs and brush on the grave and burn them, so as to conceal it from the Indians and prevent them from digging poor Geery up for his scalp and clothes.

We then gathered our things together as best we could, and, packing up, moved on in single file out of the gorge, camping, or rather hiding, in the sage-brush some six miles away, where we arrived in the night."

The report of this "Yellowstone Expedition" reads like a romance. From the day Stnart's party crossed Shields River and entered into the sacred precincts of the country known as the Big Horn Country they met with a daily repetition of thrilling experiences, hair-breadth escapes and, for many of the party, no escape except in death. They found the Crows, as all who have ever known them could testify, the most consummate, cowardly thieves and rascals of all the red devils in America. 'Tis true that a Crow cannot enjoy a good meal, even on the point of starvation, unless he can truly say that he stole the food. I have given them bread and meat and have seen them go off looking disconsolate and sad, and after awhile have seen them hide my gift, and then sneak up to it, snatch it from the cache and make off with it hid under their blanket, looking much happier. They are treacherous, more so than their neighbors, the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, yet withal they are arrant cowards. Thirty years ago they held by occupation and hereditary Indian title all the region of country north of the Cheyenne River, south of the Yellowstone, east of the Big Horn Mountains and west of the Black Hills, a country large enough to make a bright gem in the sisterhood of States. With all this territory naturally fortified, with many warriors, rich in horses, game on every hill and in every vale, they allowed themselves to be driven back on every side by their

braver neighbors until, had it not been for the General Government interfering, the pusillanimous Crows would have long ago gone to their, if possible, happier hunting grounds.

H. E. P.



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